

Life of the Spirit

A BLACKFRIARS REVIEW



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Life of the Spirit

A review devoted to the theology and practice of prayer and the spiritual life, it is designed to assist in the re-establishment of the Catholic tradition of ascetical and mystical writing in the English language. Contributors are therefore encouraged to submit original MSS. or translations from the Fathers.

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Life of the Spirit

Volume II

JUNE 1948

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THE SACRED HEART¹

BY

AELWIN TINDAL ATKINSON, O.P.

I have bestowed my love upon you, just as my Father has bestowed his love upon me; live on then in my love. John, 15, 9. (Mgr Knox's Version).



THE Feast of the Sacred Heart of our Lord sets before us clearly, and indeed vividly, the redemptive purpose and character of his incarnate life. The devotion itself finds its roots in the Middle Ages, in the writings of Saint Bernard for example, and later in those of Saint Catherine of Siena, as well as in one at least of the surviving works of the

English mystical writers. The living tendrils of the devotion had already sought the light, when it received its final impetus from Saint Margaret Mary and Blessed Father Claude de la Colombière and was given full recognition by the establishment of the Feast as a part of the Liturgy of the Catholic Church.

The Feast itself takes the Sacred Heart of our Lord as the point of its adoration and as the object of our devotion; for the heart of Christ comprehends and draws within it all the love that animates the deep mystery of God's being, all the love that gave us his incarnate Son, all the love that raises us up by divine grace and quickens our own hearts in response. That is the 'stimulus' of this Feast, the '*stimulus amoris divini*'; and yet the infinite mystery of divine love is here given to us in a manner that the simplest person can grasp, in a manner that we know best, we human creatures with human hearts. It is expressed for us in the human heart of the incarnate Son of God, '*qui habitavit in nobis, et vidimus gloriam ejus, quasi unigeniti a Patre, plenum gratiae et veritatis . . . et de plenitudine ejus omnes nos accepimus*'.

The human heart is the mainspring of our bodily life. Its regular beat sends the life-blood coursing through the arteries to every part of our bodies. It is responsive to the impact of external shock; of

¹ The substance of a sermon preached at the English College, Rome, on the feast of the Sacred Heart, 1947.

imminent danger, for example. The change of its rhythm reflects the play of human emotion and the activity of our human passions, love, hatred, anger, fear, happiness, sorrow: all these touch the heart closely. So it is easy to see why the heart has come for man—and for God as well—to stand as the source and spring of his love.

Every moment, every incident, of our Lord's life with us, his passion, his death, express the overflowing of God's infinite love for us through the heart of his only-begotten Son in the single redemptive act of his incarnation. The Sacred Heart is the fount of a redeeming love that alone can satisfy man's thirst for love. Here in Rome we have all seen in the Catacombs and in the great mosaics of the early centuries of the Church's life the sheep or the stags drinking from the stream of living waters that springs forth at the feet of Christ.

*O fons amoris inclyte,
O vena aquarum limpida,
O flamma adurens crimina!
O cordis ardens caritas!*

God made us to know him and to love him; and so he created in us a disposition to love and be loved, a disposition that stamps the nature and fills the heart of every child of man. Not one of us is exempt. God made us so. We are the object of his infinite love and are ourselves infinitely athirst for love. The drive and the force of that love are, as we know to our cost, often misdirected. Our love is dragged down by us to a level that sets us with the animals, to feed like the Prodigal Son off their husks; and at other times it is turned back within us to reflect the image of self as its object. Yet even in the order of nature this love can direct us rightly. We think of the love of friends, the love of a man and a woman in its right setting, the love of parents and children. We have all been touched by the inspiration of this human love, especially when we were children; and our hearts have been quickened to respond, for the first great stimulus to our love is the realisation that we are loved.

That love, we know, is not enough. God gives and looks for more than this natural love from us. If it were sufficient, we should not be here, studying for the priesthood; or, if we are already priests, still learning to follow the way of union by the way of knowledge and love. What daunts us, and may discourage us, is the abyss, the measureless gulf that seems to separate our human love as we have experienced its force, at times to our shame and sorrow, from the infinite purity of God's love. Yet we know the answer to this: 'The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us'. For us there is, in the words of Saint Catherine of Siena, the 'Bridge' across this chasm. 'Wherefore I have told thee that I have made a Bridge of my Word, of my only-begotten Son. . . . Wishing to 'remedy your great evils, I have

given you the Bridge of my Son, in order that passing across the flood you may not be drowned, which flood is the tempestuous sea of this dark life'. (*Dialogue*: c. 21). It is Saint Catherine of Siena, too, who writes of the Sacred Heart as the source of our reconciliation and union with God; and her figure of the 'Bridge' helps to drive the truth home that there is for us, come what may, a '*vera communicatio*', a '*vera communio*'. '*Ego sum via, veritas et vita*'. 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love therefore I drew thee, having pity on thee'.

Our blessed Lord, true God and true man, altogether divine and altogether human, draws us to him by way of love, by way of friendship with his fellow-man. He redeems us and raises us up to love him, as he wishes to be loved, with the love that is called Agape, the love of Charity that fulfils our nature as men: in this as in all else '*gratia perficit naturam*'. This love of which we speak is infinitely firm and buoyant, for it bears forward with it every virtue of which man is capable. It is more than mere kindness of disposition, mere benevolence, far more than that attitude which we call humanitarian; for humanitarianism is but skin-deep, as we have experienced to our cost within the last few years. This love is as strong as death, for it brings with it the fruits of Christ's passion; and under its impulse a man is ready to undergo pain, suffering, violence and death. It is a love that far exceeds our own poor capacity, that gathers and knits firmly together all those qualities in a man that we associate with Christian sanctity and Christian martyrdom. In its exercise we are called to take up the Cross by way of daily self-denial, by the death of self—in the selfish sense—and by all that is conveyed in the word mortification—and, let us add, the word expiation, for expiation bears intimately upon our love and devotion for the Sacred Heart of our Lord.

Nonetheless, mortification must not be regarded in isolation, simply as an exercise in self-control, an apprenticeship in the mastering of our lower nature. We are not Stoics, whose practice of impassivity, whose crushing of the passions, risked turning the heart to stone and the will to an inordinate pride. We are Christians, whose mortification is part of our self-surrender in love. Our self-surrender, our submission, is not forced from us as slaves; it is given freely by us men in terms of love and friendship. In the order of divine grace and charity we are fully '*causi sui*', free men, who under divine grace give ourselves fully and freely in our friendship with Christ. 'This is the greatest love a man can show, that he should lay down his life for his friends; and you, if you do all that I command you, are my friends'. The words of that heart-to-heart talk in the Upper Room brim with understanding and tenderness; they spring from a heart

of flesh, ready to shed every drop of the precious blood for us his friends next day upon Calvary.

'Jesu, mitis et humilis corde, fac cor nostrum secundum Cor tuum'.

'Aufer cor lapideum de carne nostra, et da nobis cor carneum, quod te amet, te diligat, te delectetur, te sequatur, te perfruatur'.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart is indispensable for us whom he calls to be his priests. All our lives this priesthood is to be lived and exercised in our manhood: as priests we always remain men; and there must be no trace of inhumanity in Christ's priest. Through his priesthood the humanity in us is to be developed not dwarfed, fulfilled not frustrated, raised to its true level by our striving for union with Christ. 'It was not you that chose me, it was I that chose you. The task I have appointed you is to go out and bear fruit, fruit which will endure'.

May God by his grace give us clear minds and strong wills to persevere in priestly love with the deep and tender humanity of the Sacred Heart of his only-begotten Son, who has chosen us to be his friends. He has given us already more than we dared hope for, more than we dared ask for; and so for us, in the words of a poet who has pondered upon these things,

the rest is prayer, observance, discipline,
a lifetime's death in self-surrender.

Grant us, Lord Jesus, to be animated with the virtues of thy most Sacred Heart and to be enkindled with its love; so that being conformed to the image of thy goodness, we may be counted worthy to be made the sharers of thy redemption.

DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART

BY

S. M. ALBERT, O.P.



DEVOTION to the Sacred Heart is perhaps the most popular devotion of modern times, and in its present form it may be said to date from the revelations made by our Lord to St Margaret Mary in the 17th century. But though so 'modern' it is as old as the Gospels. Our Lord himself taught the Apostles, 'Learn of me for I am meek and humble of heart', and when, after the Resurrection, he invited Thomas to put his hand into his side, the doubting Apostle must surely have felt there the beatings of the heart of whom he forthwith confessed to be his Lord and his God. St John, who leaned upon the Lord's breast at the Last Supper, and who has left us in his Gospel some account of the secrets he learned there, also describes how the soldier opened our Saviour's side as he hung dead on the cross, so that blood and water gushed forth, and it has always been the belief of saints and commentators that the lance pierced the heart too. These things have attracted the great contemplatives of every age—Saints Augustine, Bernard, Bonaventure, Gertrude, Mechtilde, Catherine of Siena, to mention only a few, all of whom lived several centuries before St Margaret Mary was chosen to popularise this devotion among the faithful in general. But while our Lord's appeal to her has been heard, and his Sacred Heart is honoured by millions of souls, it seems that many of them have an inadequate, if not even an inaccurate idea of the devotion which they practise, and that few, perhaps, penetrate so deeply into the 'secret of the heart' as did those Saints of earlier ages.

St Augustine would have called the Sacred Heart a 'sacrament' in the broad sense of the word, for it is a visible expression and symbol of an invisible reality, and the equivalent Greek word 'mysterium' reminds us that this reality pertains to the 'hidden things of the Son', the deep mysteries of the divine life which were hidden from the foundation of the world and which the created mind can never fully fathom: '*Ut dum visibiliter Deum cognoscimus, per hunc in invisibilium amorem rapiamur*'. But because man receives all his knowledge through the senses, he is always in danger of stopping at the visible symbol and of missing the invisible reality to which it points and of which it is the expression, and so in this case the Church, in her wisdom, has forbidden the representation of the heart of Christ apart from his divine Person.

For all devotion to any part of the sacred humanity, the five

wounds, the precious blood, the soul of Christ, is devotion to the whole person, and all devotion to the person of Christ is devotion to the divinity to which that humanity is united in the intimacy of the hypostatic union: 'When the faithful adore the heart of the Saviour, they do not isolate it from the divinity, they adore the heart of the person of the Word to which it is inseparably united'. (*Denzinger*, 1563).

The heart of man is regarded as the seat of the affections and the will, as the fount of life and the symbol of love, and in the sacred humanity, the most perfect human organism ever formed, the Sacred Heart represents all these functions. Suffering and sorrow are attributed to the heart, and as the cult of the Sacred Heart has become in our day predominantly one of reparation. 'Console thou me' has been addressed by our Saviour to many of the saints, and the thought of the agony he has caused the heart of his God has wrought the conversion of many a sinner.

But there is danger here. The heart of Christ is not a dead relic like the heart of a saint. It is the heart of the risen Christ, who sits in glory at the right hand of the Father, in the abode of the blessed where suffering and sorrow no longer exist. It beats in a glorified body which is incapable of suffering, mental or physical. Consequently any revelations which speak of grief and sorrow on the part of Christ—or for that matter of our blessed Lady, or any of the saints—must be understood in a mystical sense. Because Christ is God he lives in the eternal 'now', and when he suffered and died all men were present to him. It was as if, in the persons of the persecutors and executioners, the sin and sinners of all time inflicted those sufferings on him, while the saints and just of all time consoled and comforted him in the persons of his Mother and the faithful few who followed him even to Calvary. (Perhaps the consolation afforded by the Angel in the garden may have consisted partly in a reminder of the 'compassion' of all his lovers throughout the ages). Our own Mother Julian of Norwich, about whose devotion to the Sacred Heart more will be said, understood this truth very clearly. (cf. *Revelations*, cc. 18, 77).

But besides the human Christ there is the mystical Christ, Christ in his members who 'fill up what is wanting in his sufferings'. He has said that whatever is done to the least of them is done to him. Compassion for them in their troubles is indeed compassion for him, and charity towards our neighbour is perhaps the only sure way of proving our love for God. St Catherine of Siena is continually insisting on this truth, and it was after the miraculous exchange of hearts, when our Lord had taken away hers and replaced it by his own, that she left her hidden life of loving and contemplating God, to become a

martyr of love in the service of her neighbour, of the Church, the 'sweet Spouse of Christ', and of the pope whom she called the 'sweet Christ on earth'. A great love and compassion for the Holy Father should be the natural expression of devotion to the Sacred Heart.

We worship God, as St Thomas reminds us (II-II. 81.7), not for his sake, for we can add nothing to his essential glory, and he has no need of any other, but for our own, since by our worship we unite and submit ourselves to him, and in this our perfection consists. St Gertrude in a vision asked the Beloved Disciple why he had not spoken of the mysteries of the Sacred Heart as he had of those of the uncreated Word, and he replied that 'the sweet eloquence of the throbbings of the heart of Christ was reserved for the time when the world has grown old and has become cold in God's love, that it may regain fervour by hearing such a revelation'. (*Revelations of St Gertrude*, Bk. IV, c. 4). All save the most hardened hearts are moved to pity by the sight of suffering, and we can see in our Lord's plea for reparation, an instance of the divine condescension in adapting graces to the littleness and weakness of the creature.

For the heart not only suffers, it also rejoices and, while suffering is proper to man in his fallen state, joy is an aspect of the life of God. The human heart of Christ suffered during its mortal life, but it also rejoiced, and now, when its sorrows are at an end, it lives in the joy of the Lord which nothing can cloud. The sensibility of Christ responded to every human joy which gladdens the heart of man, and still more to those spiritual joys which make saints the happiest of mortals even in the midst of trials and contradictions. And because his holy soul enjoyed the Beatific Vision, his Sacred Heart also possessed that beatitude which is the essential joy of heaven, though at times, as during the Passion, he miraculously suspended the overflow of this joy to his human sensibility.

Even St Margaret Mary, who may be called the apostle of reparation, was reminded by a vision of the Seraphim that 'Love triumphs, love enjoys, the love of the Sacred Heart rejoices', and she was asked to form a partnership whereby the Angels should suffer in her person and she rejoice in and with them, thus offering to the Sacred Heart a perpetual homage of love, adoration and praise. (*Autobiography of St Margaret Mary*, p. 113). With many of the older mystics the contemplation of the Sacred Heart rejoicing seems to have been uppermost. St Gertrude perceived a twofold movement of that Heart, the first effecting the salvation of sinners, the second that of the just. 'By the second movement of my heart, I invite my Father to rejoice with me for having poured forth my Precious Blood so efficaciously for the just in whose merits I find so many delights' (*op. cit.*, Bk. 3, c. XLIII). Mother Julian begins her chapter on the revelation of the

Sacred Heart with the words: 'Then with glad cheer our Lord looked unto his side and beheld rejoicing. . . .' She declares that he showed her his 'blissful heart, cloven in two', and that he invited her 'for my love enjoy now with me'; and she concludes: 'This shewed our good Lord for to make us glad and merry'. It is worthy of note that the Introit of the original Mass of the Sacred Heart in the Dominican rite, and the Chapter at Vespers and Lauds, are those verses from the Canticle of Canticles which speak of 'the day of the joy of his heart', while all the Psalms at Matins save the first (the 21st) and the last (the 85th) are psalms of joy and exultation.

The aspect of devotion to the Sacred Heart leads deeper into the 'mysterium', for as St Thomas says, joy is an effect of love, and the heart is above all the symbol of love. When our Lord appeared to St Margaret Mary, he showed her his heart and said: 'Behold the heart which has so loved men', and Mother Julian declares that 'He shewed his blissful heart cloven in two, saying "Lo, how I loved thee"'. '*Imago bonitatis suae*' is the phrase used in the Collect for the Feast of the Sacred Heart.

Love, as St Thomas insists, is a gift. It even 'has the nature of the first gift—*habet rationem primi doni*—in virtue whereof all free gifts are given'. (I. 38. 2). It is the source and motive of all that is given while being itself the greatest gift of all, since it implies the gift of self. Thus the Sacred Heart symbolises that love which inspired and expressed itself in all that he did for men, and in all that he gave to men. His life on earth, his preaching and miracles, all the supernatural treasures he has bestowed on us, our redemption, his abiding presence in the blessed Sacrament, all these are but expressions of that total gift of himself which he has made by loving us. 'He loved me, and delivered himself for me'. And as if to demonstrate how this love emptied itself of all and as it were broke itself in an effort to convince us that nothing which could be given was kept back, when the sacred humanity had shed its blood and given its life, the lifeless heart was pierced, and from it flowed blood and water. The mystery of that wound, the 'wound of love' as the Church calls it, can never be fully fathomed or expressed, but the mystics are agreed that in some mysterious way it forms a gateway through which man enters into the abyss of divine love, and a shelter wherein all mankind can dwell, safe from every evil which threatens them. Thus St Catherine says: 'Let your place of refuge be Christ Crucified, my only-begotten Son: dwell and hide yourselves in the cavern of his side where you will taste through love for his humanity, my divine nature'. (*Dialogue*, ch. 124).

But it remains only a gateway, for however immeasurable and incomprehensible the human love of Christ may be, it is only the

created image, the finite channel and instrument of that infinite Love which is the life and being of the Blessed Trinity. 'And with this sweet enjoying he shewed unto mine understanding, in part, the Blessed Godhead, stirring then the poor soul to undersand . . . i.e. to think on the endless Love that was without beginning, and is, and shall be ever'. (Mother Julian, *Revelations*, c. 24).

God is love, and his love of his own goodness is the reason why he has created other things to participate in that goodness. 'All his works whatever are love alone, for they are not wrought of anything save love'. (St Catherine). The whole explanation of man's life and destiny is to be found only in God's love for him, and the mystery of that love is revealed and symbolised in the Heart of Love Incarnate. 'Lo how I loved thee! I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee . . .' 'God so loved the world as to give his only Son . . .' Predestination—'ere God made us he loved us' (Mother Julian, c. 86); 'God has known creatures eternally in their proper natures, and for that reason has loved them'. (I. 15. 2 ad 2): the redemption—'The pain (of the Passion) was a wonderful deed done in time by the working of love; and love was without beginning and shall be without ending' (Mother Julian, c. 22); even the mysteries of pain and evil have their explanation in the love of God for man 'in which love he hath wrought *all* his works'. That is the secret hidden from the foundation of the world, and revealed in and through the heart of the Son of God; that God is Love, that he has eternally loved man with this infinite love which is his very life and being, and that he became man so that this Love might express itself in a human manner which the mind and heart of man could easily understand.

'He loved me . . .' God loves man. Calvary and the holy Eucharist show to what limits that love would go. But he loves man only because he loves himself, because by a single eternal act he loves himself and every creature, which is only insofar as it participates in the divine Goodness; and it is the love of God which imparts to it its share in that Goodness. Love is the life of the Blessed Trinity. It is the life of the Person of the Word who said 'I am the Life', and who assumed a human body that he might become the life of men. And both as God and as man, if one may so express it, the life of the Word may be summed up in a phrase—to love that Father. 'That the world may know that I love the Father'. First, as God, with the uncreated Love, then as man, with the created love of Charity, as well as with the purely natural affection of the human heart. God is a consuming fire, a fire of love, and the heart of the incarnate God is, in its turn, a 'burning furnace of Charity'. In him the uncreated love of God for God is found in a created nature; in him that love is as it

were translated into human language in that fulness of charity possessed by his holy soul, and of which our charity is but a participation. By and through the heart of Christ a man loves God as he deserves and ought and wills to be loved, and as he loves himself. To many, or perhaps to only too few, this is the most consoling aspect of devotion to the Sacred Heart.

'Is Christ divided?' asked St Paul. The Mystical Christ cannot be separated from the human Christ. As St Thomas points out, the grace of Christ as an individual and as head of the Mystical Body are not two distinct things but the same reality looked at from different aspects. The grace of the head flows down as it were to all the members, the life of the head to vitalise each member. And so with the love of the heart of Christ; that also is meant to burn in the heart of every Christian: 'I am come to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I but that it be enkindled?' . . . 'That the Love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them'.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart does not end when we have offered reparation to the sorrowing Christ, nor even when we have adored and praised the 'too great' love of God for his creatures. It is not even sufficient to obey our Lord's injunction to learn of him because he is meek and humble of heart, and to imitate as from a distance the virtues which he exhibits. What is required is an identification with, an assimilation to him, so that, insofar as is humanly possible, his heart becomes ours and ours his; that is, that our heart is so completely surrendered to him that he can use it as if it were his own, so that it becomes so united to his that it has no other sentiments, no other will, no other love save his. Then it is 'one spirit with the Lord, and it has attained to that unity of will with the will of God, which St John of the Cross describes in the *Living Flame of Love* as the summit of the transforming union.

The mystical phenomena which are common in the lives of the great 'Saints of the Sacred Heart' seem to be intended to show forth in a sensible manner these spiritual realities. (It must be remembered, though, that such phenomena are graces *gratis datae*, which do not sanctify the recipient and are not in themselves necessarily an indication of holiness. They may even be produced by natural, or possibly by diabolical agencies. They are bestowed by God either to point to the holiness of the individual, or to symbolise and demonstrate either to the recipient or to others the spiritual realities which they represent.)

The love of God is a consuming fire which purges and burns away the impurities in the soul which gives itself to him, while at the same time imparting to it some of its own burning heat. And so St Margaret Mary saw the Sacred Heart of our Lord as a burning furnace in which

he placed her heart which he had taken from her side, replacing it as a burning flame in the form of a heart. In her account of the incident the Saint adds: 'It produces such heat within me that it burns and consumes me alive'.

The Sacred Heart is also a 'fountain of life and holiness', the 'source of all consolation'. St Margaret Mary, St Catherine and others have been allowed to place their mouth to the wound in the side of Christ, and drink therefrom some precious liquor which filled them with consolation and sweetness (cf. Mother Julian, c. 60). This recalls the blood and water which flowed from our Lord's side on the Cross, which the Fathers, following St Augustine, have usually regarded as representing Baptism and the Holy Eucharist.

In the Sacred Heart are 'hidden all treasures of wisdom and knowledge'; from it one may learn the 'secret of the heart' of which St Catherine often speaks, and which St John surely divulged when he declared that 'God is Love', and which Mother Julian in her turn discovered when, after 20 years' meditation, she understood that 'in this and in all, love was his meaning'. And so others besides St John, St Gertrude for example, have been permitted to lean on the breast of their Lord, and there learn the mysteries which the heart of God teaches, and the heart alone can understand.

Mother Julian as well as St Bernard, St Catherine and St Mechtilde, saw in the wounded side and heart of Christ a refuge from every danger, one large enough to contain 'all mankind that shall be saved'. When the young Nicholas Tuldo had been executed, St Catherine in a vision saw his soul enter into the side of Christ, and she frequently exhorted her disciples to 'hide themselves in the wounded side where they would learn the secret of the heart'.

The supreme symbol of the significance of devotion to the Sacred Heart is found in the life of St Catherine of Siena. Her confessor, Bl. Raymund of Capua, relates that one day as she was praying '*Cor mundum crea in me, Deus*', and begging God to take away her own heart and will, our Lord appeared, opened her left side, and took away her heart. Despite the incredulity and even amusement of her sceptical spiritual father, the Saint insisted that her heart was no longer in her body, and that by a special grace she was able to live without one. Some days later our Lord again appeared bearing in his hand a glowing and resplendent heart which he placed in her side, saying: 'My dearest daughter, just as I took away your heart the other day, so now I give you mine, which will make you live for ever'. Henceforward she was unable to use her favourite ejaculation, 'Lord, I give you my heart', but was always constrained to say '*Thy heart*', and it was after this event that she embarked upon her career of exterior apostolic labours which were certainly more divine than

human, while her spiritual graces and illuminations were even more remarkable than before.

'*Cor mundum crea in me, Deus*', prayed David and many after him, and God has promised through the mouth of the prophet, 'I will take away your heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh'. God alone can effect this transformation, and yet he will only do it at our request, if we wish it and do what lies in our power to prepare for it. 'My son, give me thy heart'. That is the first stage. We must surrender to him all that we have and are and desire and love—the gift of love, '*quae habet rationem primi doni*'. In virtue of a special grace, some souls are able to make this surrender once and for all, completely and irrevocably, so that, like St Catherine, they can say that they have no heart of their own; but for most of us it will be a very slow and painful process, nature taking back today what grace forced it to relinquish yesterday. But so long as the desire, the will to give all is there, God 'to whom every heart speaks' will understand, and in his own good time will intervene and take away this heart of stone.

'And I will give you a heart of flesh'. No one can exist without a heart; he must live, and living, he must love, and the heart is as it were the source of both life and love. We surrender our own human heart only in order that the heart of Christ, 'King and centre of all hearts', may replace it as it replaced the heart of Catherine. 'The heart of Paul is the heart of Christ', declared St John Chrysostom. As the priest says in the person of Christ, 'This is *my* body', so Christ wishes to be able to say in each individual, 'This is my body, this is *my* heart'. That is the very purpose of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist—the unity of the members with their Head (and consequently with each other). And this is effected because this heavenly Food, instead of being assimilated to them as is the case with natural food, assimilates them to itself. In a very real, if mystical sense, Holy Communion is meant to make us one body with Christ as well as one spirit with the Lord, so that infinite Love which expressed itself in and through the human heart of the incarnate Word, can, so far as is possible without the hypostatic union, take similar possession of our hearts, so completely do they beat in unison with his.

All that the heart of Christ is to God and man, each individual heart is meant in its degree to become, is capable of becoming. A source of love, life, holiness, consolation, adoration—the Litany of the Sacred Heart enumerates many of these things; a *source*, overflowing to others, a fountain springing up unto life everlasting. The greatest contemplatives *must* also be the greatest apostles, because they are beings of love, their being and their life, like those of Christ

and of the blessed Trinity itself, *are* love, and love must give and overflow—'*amor est diffusivus sui*': God's love for God, and God's love for man, symbolised and expressed in human language in and by that heart of God incarnate which has become their heart. A source to which all who thirst may come and drink, to which even God himself will come and drink: '*Sitio; da mihi bibere*. I thirst; give me to drink'. The mystery here is profound and confronts us with the paradox of all God's dealings with men. It is the mystery of divine Wisdom which disposes all things to its own glory and our salvation, which has no need of anything save itself, yet which longs and seeks to be known and understood by men, which *thirsts* for the souls of the creatures it has made; that Wisdom which speaks to the heart and is understood only by the heart, and which became incarnate that man might the more easily have access to its living waters, its torrent of sweetness, its fire of love. It is the 'secret of the heart', which is learnt and understood only by those who rest on the breast of Christ. May we be of their number.

SUPERSTITION VERSUS SACRAMENTS

BY

A. G. HERRING



O say that sacraments are magic may be no more than vulgar abuse but it may be a scientific attack. In this short article we will suppose it is the latter and try to deal with it accordingly, and it may be worth while to say at the start that most of the reasons why men are tempted to classify Sacraments as magical are due to their being considered as more or less separate and independent elements. Indeed the writer seems to remember a learned lecturer in the Angelico College at Rome some years ago speaking of the danger of treating the Sacraments *nimis avulsa* from the person of Christ. This is a most important aspect of sacramental theology which deserves an article to itself. Here we would take it simply as a starting point for opposing an attack on the sacraments which reveals a danger in the use of them.

Now it seems that every important organ of a physical body has some disease to which it is specially liable. (Indeed one well-known mental specialist maintained that there is a mental affliction to correspond with every physical illness). In the same way it seems that there is a debased form to correspond with most, if not all, of the elements of true religion. Thus, to begin at the lower end, blessed objects misunderstood and misused would be on the way to becoming comparable to fetishes, a belief in the saints might descend into polytheism, and sacraments misunderstood would correspond to magic more than to any other form of falsity. Why so?

We will now point out those characteristics of the sacraments which our opponents lay hold of in order to make their claim, viz., that they partake of the nature of magic. First the effect claimed for a sacrament seems out of all proportion to the visible cause—the exertions of the celebrant. Secondly, the claim that they are infallible in producing their effects (unless we put an obstacle in the way) seems to show that the sacraments have a power of ‘forcing’ the Deity, which is one of the chief properties of magic. Thirdly, sacraments are *sui generis* not exactly prayer, nor worship nor sacrifice, but are signs and so would seem to correspond to sympathetic magic.

These objections may be quite briefly answered. Firstly, that a very small cause is said to produce such a great effect. St Thomas points out that the sacraments cannot of themselves give grace; they are simply instruments in God’s hand. So this difficulty vanishes at once when sacraments are considered (as they should be) in close

relation with their Author. Secondly, the operation of the sacraments seems like forcing the hands of God. But our opponents appear to assume that everything that is certain, regular and completely reliable must belong to the realm of science, so as to leave to religion only what is vague and uncertain. Yet no one seems to find any difficulty about the 'Covenant' about which so much is said in the Old Testament. God can bind himself, and here again the certainty of the operation of a sacrament is due to the promise and will of Christ, so that when we celebrate a sacrament we rely on the fidelity of Christ and at the same time honour that fidelity, and that is as far from magic as it is possible to conceive.

Dr McDougall in his *Social Psychology* (p. 263) writes:

I suggest that the fundamental distinction between religious and magical practices is not that religion conceives the powers it envisages as personal powers while magic conceives them as impersonal, but rather that the religious attitude is always that of submission, the magical attitude that of self-assertion. . . .

Now turning to the *Summa* of St Thomas, we find various reasons for the existence of sacraments:

Secunda ratio sumenda est ex statu hominis, qui peccando se subdidit per affectum corporalibus rebus. Ibi, autem, debet medicinale remedium homine adhiberi ubi patitur morbum. (III. 61. 1.)

So the use of sacraments is an example not of arrogance but rather of contrition, and not of agnosticism but of faith—for St Thomas also says:

Sacramenta (sunt) quaedam signa protestantia fidem quo justificatur homo. (III. 61. 4.)

And thus magic rather suggests someone who has made a 'corner' in knowledge or skill of a queer sort and is using it for more or less anti-social ends; sacraments, on the contrary, are operations connected with great historic events in the past as they recall the work and Passion of Christ. (see *Summa* III. 60. 3) and the teaching of the Church concerning them is open to all men to study.

Nor is it surprising that Old Testament rites and Christian sacraments should have much outwardly in common with pagan practices, seeing that the former were instituted by God to suit human nature, and evolved by man out of the same nature. But the intentions can be very different. This is a point which St Thomas emphasises again and again. To take only one instance at random, he says that worship towards the west was introduced in the law to exclude idolatry, for others turned to the east to worship the sun. St Thomas is constantly pointing out that practices were intended to withdraw the people from false worship by being different in some respect from those of the surrounding nations.

Thus in dealing with the sacraments St Thomas shows that one of their merits is that they help to exclude superstition, for if they did not occupy the strategic points of life, such as birth, growth, marriage, sickness and death, it is certain that some superstitious rites would find a footing. In recent years this has been brought home to us by the action of the Nazis with their life feasts and ceremonies for naming a child and so on (cf. *Blackfriars*, 'Nazi Liturgy', Feb., 1946). Lotz has well expressed this:

Whenever human races have not quite degenerated, we find the birth of a child, his attainment of manhood, marriage, death and burial all distinguished by ceremonies . . . indicating the feeling that in human life nothing takes place rightly and as it should if it merely takes place, if it is not recognised and set in its fitting place in the succession of events by the participation in some ceremony of a community, a society, a family. (*Microcosmos*, 1, 598.)

So the sacraments garrison important points and prevent superstitious practices from gaining a footing they otherwise surely would obtain. This is not to say that certain people here and there may not have a more or less superstitious approach to sacraments—the weakness of human nature will account for such. The writer knew of a case (not in a Catholic Church) when after a Baptism in which the child had been named (say) Henry John, the father afterwards gave his name as John Henry, and on being asked why he had reversed the order remarked that he had had bad luck and thought this might help his child to do better.

Nor can any capital be made out of the fact that sacraments are 'signs'. They are signs because they signify in the past the Passion of Christ, in the present the conferring of grace and in the future the hope of glory (cf. *O Sacrum Convivium*), whereas sympathetic magic seems to be based on the principle of the dummy egg. But even here we must be fair and cautious. It may be that much which European observers have taken to be magical symbolism may have been intended as a 'prayer acted out'. As the Rev. M. Briault, C.S.Sp. writes:

Everything in magic need not . . . be wrong. It may preserve beliefs similar to those of religion, but . . . it seeks alliances with perverse elements, it is always more or less mingled with esotericism and mystery. (*Polytheism and Fetishism*, p. 169.)

Sacraments, on the other hand, are in alliance with all that is good, they are open to all men to receive, and in so far as they are mysteries no one can completely comprehend their working, but what can be understood is open for the examination of one and all.

SIMPLICITY

BY

H. C. GRAEF



IN our age of psychoanalysis and complicated machinery simplicity is a quality of life and character much underrated, if not actually despised. Perhaps this is the reason why so many of the Saints recently placed on the altars by the Church for our example are men and women of striking simplicity, and even children. St Bernadette, the Curé d'Ars, St Thérèse de Lisieux, Bl. Maria Goretti—a peasant girl, a peasant priest, a young Carmelite cultivating the childlike spirit in its integrity, and a child martyr for purity. It seems as if the Holy Ghost deliberately opposed simplicity to the neurasthenic complications of the modern world.

Our age is given to despise simplicity, perhaps because it is so difficult to understand and even more difficult to attain, except for those in love with it; and it certainly is almost impossible to define. For the sovereignly simple Being, God, is completely above our natural understanding; and even the great simple things of our daily experience, life and death, love and beauty, cannot be perfectly understood by our reason, though we know them when we meet them, for they 'stare us in the face'.

Perhaps it may seem too sweeping a statement to say that our age despises simplicity. Are not movements such as the 'Back to the Land' and fashions like 'Primitive Art' indications of the need felt for a return to simplicity?

Ay, there's the rub. We cannot 'return' to simplicity, any more than the mature man or woman can return to childhood. If we try to 'return' we shall just be cranks, grown-ups playing at 'let's pretend'. There is no real simplicity in such movements, which are most frequently sponsored by the sophisticated. Yet there is a way to simplicity; not a way back, but a way forward. Unless you become as little children. . . . Except a man be born again. . . . It does not mean to return into our mother's womb, as Nicodemus foolishly imagined; it does not mean becoming primitive by some artificial retrograde movement—simplicity is not the same as primitivity, and is reached, in fact, only by a slow, progressive (not retrogressive) transformation under the influence of that great simplifying power that theologians call grace and that brings forth all the good things of the true life.

For simplicity is marvellously fruitful. Take for example those

few simple sentences which are called the Beatitudes. Blessed are the poor in spirit. . . . Blessed are the meek. . . . Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. . . . The sublimest way of perfection is expressed in these few bare sentences, in which there is not a superfluous word; they have provided generation after generation of saints with food for their spiritual life, and a succession of theologians from Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine to Thomas Aquinas, and down to modern scholars like Gardeil and Garrigou-Lagrange with an inexhaustible source for their teaching on Christian perfection. For the simpler a thing is, the more universal and fruitful. We can meditate all our lives on the Our Father and discover ever new riches in it; or, on a lower plane, we can probe into the clear-cut articles of St Thomas and find fresh light in them with each reading. It is the simple things that last through the centuries, which later generations develop, re-interpret, and assimilate as food is assimilated—absorbing what nourishes them, making it their own.

Or let us take the sublime simplicity of the divine drama of the Redemption. Because man, changeable creature that he is, had offended God by his disobedience, God, in his infinite love, became man to repair the fault by his obedience. A child can understand it—in fact a child can understand it far more readily than a grown-up person. God became man, and for his human life he chose the simplest setting: a manger, a carpenter's family, a small town in an out-of-the-way province of the Roman Empire. Fishermen and women were his followers, and his most terrifying thunders were reserved for those who made the way to God so complicated that only they themselves pretended to be able to walk in it.

Yet the way to God is very simple. 'I am the Way'. You know not how to be united to him, the Way that leads to the Father? Why, nothing could be simpler. You need only love him; and see, he takes the simple things of your daily meals, Bread and Wine, and says these simple Words: Take and eat, this is my body . . . Drink, this is my blood. . . . And so you have him within you, so you are united to him, far more intimately than ever woman was to her lover. Are we to be scandalised—as so many of his followers—and leave him, because our minds, made complicated by sin, cannot grasp the simplicity of divine Love?

If we would bring forth fruit sixty- and a hundred-fold, we must feed our souls on the simple food of the Body of our Lord and of the teaching of his Church; that food marvellously designed by the Giver of all food to be assimilated by each one of us according to his capacity. And the way of assimilation is the way of prayer, because it assimilates us to God himself. It leads with wonderful

efficacy from multiplicity to unity, from complication to simplicity. We begin with laborious meditation or spiritual reading; taking point by point, sentence by sentence, pressing out its meaning as juice is pressed out of an orange. And then, if we are faithful, there comes a day when not a drop of juice will come, however hard we press with our understanding; and the understanding itself will refuse to go on with its labours, which have become futile. On that day, however useless all our efforts may seem, we should rejoice, for our feet have been set on the blessed way of simplicity. Under the increasing action of the Holy Ghost, our activities are more and more unified, and, slowly, our whole life becomes marvellously simple.

For it is a simple thing to say: 'Thy will be done'—though it may all but break one's heart. The supremely simple act of giving his human will entirely to the Father cost the Son of God the agony of Gethsemani. For an action to be simple does not mean it to be easy. More often than not the simple way of dealing with a situation will be the most difficult and costly, while the roundabout and complicated escape will be the easy 'way out'. It is the simplicity of martyrdom—and that simplicity, too, our world has to learn anew, as our brethren on the Continent of Europe have already learnt it in concentration camps and before firing squads; and as all the saints have had to learn it, whether they died in their beds or on the rack. For it is only when all the complications and neuroses produced in us by our pampered self-will shall have been purged away by suffering—whether it be in this world or in the next—that we shall be sufficiently conformed to the divine Simplicity to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

LOVE OF THE WORD

BY

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.



E cannot take leave of Richard Rolle without listening to his principal message and the one which is the dominant theme of the illuminative way. His greatest work was on 'The Fire of Love', his most unique mystical experience was the burning of love in his breast, and his poetry which did more than anything else to spread his spirit among his contemporaries is concerned with the sweet love of Jesus, his Spouse. Love is thought, with great desire of a fair Loving.¹ The illumination as we have seen comes principally from the shining of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in the beginning of infused contemplation. But this light cannot of course be separated from the Word whose function it is to enlighten the understanding. Indeed the activities of the second and third Persons of the Blessed Trinity in this respect cannot be separated; it is the one action of the *Verbum spirans amorem*.

The mind truly disposed to cleanness, receives from God the thought of eternal love . . . [and it is necessary that this] mind be fully knit unto Christ, and it lasts in desires and thoughts of love—the which are certain and endless intent—and which thoughts, wherever he be, sitting or going, he meditates within himself without ceasing, desiring nothing but Christ's love (*Fire of Love* 25, Misyn-Comper p. 107.)

This is typical of Rolle and of the period we are here considering. One of the sweetest joys now is to meet Jesus, the Word Incarnate, in this new and more intimate life of love.

On the side of the creature lover there has grown up through the various purifications and the 'cleansing' of his mind a desire far purer than when he first set out to serve the Lord. At first the yearning of the soul for God was occasioned principally by the knowledge of the *duty* of loving God above all things, then came the fuller understanding of the will of God as a personal love for the soul which in its turn responded more spontaneously in its longing; and now that the divine touch has been laid on her the soul begins to experience an almost bitter desire for the Beloved. Commenting on the opening verse of Psalm 12, Rolle says:

¹ Cf. *The Life of Richard Rolle with his English Lyrics*. F. M.M. Comper, p. 248.

The voice of holy men, who covet and yearn the coming of Jesus Christ, that they may live with him in joy, and complaining of delaying, says: 'Lord, how long forgettest thou me, in the ending', which I covet to have and to hold, that is 'how long delayest thou me from the sight of Jesus Christ, who is the very ending of my intent?' 'And how long turnest thou thy face from me?' that is, 'When wilt thou give me a perfect knowing of thee?' These words may none say truly save a perfect man or woman who has gathered together all the desires of her soul and with the nail of love fastened them in Jesus Christ. . . . (cf. H. E. Allen, *English Writings of Richard Rolle*, pp. 10-1.)

The beginnings of love have stirred up a desire which in its turn feeds love and prepares the way for the divine love to descend more completely into the dwelling of his choice. 'For the longer we live the hotter we desire thee, and the more joy we feel in thy love, and painfully we hie to thee' (*Fire of Love*, 26, p. 110.)

This desire regarded from the ascetic point of view arises from the renunciation of worldly, material desires and concupiscence. Rolle offers his book to those who 'all things forgetting and putting aback that are longing to this world, they love to be given only the desires of our Master' (*Prologue*, Misyn p. 13); and in the 8th chapter of the 1st book he describes how they must fly all worldly attractions, and staunch the wounds of fleshly desires. He calls this 'highest poverty'; indeed it represents the cutting away of earthly ties and attachments; and in *The Form of Living* he gives as the first two signs of a man's being in charity that he has no coveting of earthly things, and that he has a fervent longing for heaven so that he can find no joy in this life. (cf. Heseltine, *Selected Works*, p. 46).

But this negative way of regarding the quenching of earthly lusts can only reveal a superficial aspect of the new-found joy in desiring. For it is not possible merely to destroy all human yearning. The heart is made to desire, and to destroy its every longing would be to destroy human life itself. Mere repression achieves ill results, as is manifest in a thousand ways in modern neurotic conditions. To insist that a man should not fix his heart on any creature without showing him an alternative object would dry up the spring of life. This in fact explains why some people who have forsaken the world by vow and state of life become withered in spirit, narrow in outlook, bitter in company. They have few desires and these are mostly of a negative character; they often become valetudinarians because they are conscious only of what they lack; being without joy in living they seek it in vain in physical health.

St Thomas teaches that poverty of itself is a negative state rather than a dynamic virtue, for it cuts away rather than fills up. One must

cut the painter and push out into the deep in order to catch the big fish; but the cutting in itself is only the occasion of the catch—he does not haul in the fish with the stumpy end of the painter. Rolle follows the same teaching as the Angel of the Schools in this matter of the ‘highest poverty’.

Truly by itself poverty is no virtue but rather wretchedness; nor for itself praised, but because it is the instrument of virtue and helps to get blessedness, and makes any eschew many occasions of sinning. And therefore it is to be praised and desired. It lets a man from being honoured, although he be virtuous; but rather it makes him despised and over-led, and cast out among lovers of the world. To suffer all which for Christ is highly needful (*The Mending of Life*. 3. Misyn-Comper. p. 205. Cf. *Form of Living* 10. Heseltine p. 42).

Our Lord himself takes the place of all these worldly desires. The positive fulfilment of desire in him is the only human way of assuaging all the variety of yearnings in the heart of man. It is as though all the rivulets of passing human wishes, the craving for little luxuries and human comforts, all flow into the one great stream of the burning desire for Christ himself. He is man and he is God and he can fulfil all the passions of human nature by transforming them in some way into a part of divine love. So strong can this stream become as to convey the soul to the very threshold of death itself in a flood which is the exact contrary to the desire of self-destruction in suicide.

‘Thou truly art my Treasure, and all the desire of my heart; and because of thee I shall perfectly see thee, for then I shall have thee’. And I spake thus to death: ‘O Death, where dwellest thou? Why comest thou so late to me, living but yet mortal? Why halsest thou not him that desires thee? Who is enough to think [*excogitare*] thy sweetness, that art the end of sighing, the beginning of desire, the gate of unfailing yearning? Thou art the end of heaviness. . . . Behold I grow hot and desire after thee. . . . Behold I truly languish for love; I desire to die; for thee I burn; and yet truly not for thee but for my saviour Jesu’. (*Fire of Love* 16. Misyn-Comper. p. 74-5).

Quia amore langueo. This is the theme not only of all Rolle’s main work, but also of all the medieval spiritual literature; and it is a theme which is only realised in life by those who have entered into the new world of delights granted by infused contemplation.² Of course the sinner as soon as he had turned from his evil ways had

² It is useful to compare this medieval outpouring with the words of Dom Belorgey in the description of the joy of finding Jesus once more in the prayer of Quiet. (*La Pratique de l’oraison mentale*, vol. 2. p. 72).

received the gift of infused charity with the influx of grace; but charity in this life is a movement towards the beloved Object. In heaven all will be at rest for desire will be fulfilled and love will reign perfect in its possession. But here it is always, or should be always, growing, moving towards its object. 'Lord Jesu, I ask thee, give me movement in thy love withouten measure', says Rolle, and a little later he defines the love of man on earth precisely in terms of this gradual reduction of the desire into the joy of possession: 'What is love but the transforming of desire into the thing loved?' (*Fire of Love*. Misyn p. 78 and 79). The whole of the way towards God, the entire extent of the progress of the spiritual life is, of course, simply a development in charity which gradually absorbs all the faculties of a human person, his intellect included, and brings them to cohesion point in God. At first charity lies almost hidden, like the foundations of a building, at the back of the active life of purification in which the moral virtues predominate. Charity is the form, the extrinsic form, of the patience and mercy, the humility and penance of the first steps in the spiritual life. Yet of necessity activity, service, prudential and 'moral' considerations hold sway. But as these virtues develop they become more and more rooted in love, and the extrinsic form itself begins to overshadow all others. At first a man will put up with trials because he knows that this is necessary, that God demands it, that it will cleanse his spirit and that patience is a human perfection. But there comes a time, if he has been growing up spiritually, when he will do all for the love of God; he will be patient because he loves our Lord and follows him by love step by step in the Passion.

This is, therefore, the point when the active life of the moral virtues gives place to the contemplative life of the theological. This fact is borne out, as we shall see later, by Walter Hilton in his *Scale* up which the active only ascends to a point where he may have some fitful glimpses of the full transformation; but it is for Hilton the full re-forming of the soul in 'faith and feeling' where the contemplative really takes over. And this formation of the soul 'in faith and feeling' seems to correspond closely with the contemplative life of Rolle whose love of God seems to diffuse his whole being.

For Hilton the final stage of 'reformation in faith and feeling' would seem to be the state of union when love has transformed everything into God, but there is a lesser degree in which the '*mens*', the supreme part of the soul, has not entirely been changed by the Gifts of the Spirit; so, as we should expect, contemplative life begins properly with the first regular influx of infused contemplation. And this is the period when the soul first really languishes for love.

The soul has approached closer than ever before to God, not, as Thomas says following St Gregory, by physical paces but by steps

of love. Rolle has himself set out briefly his measure of these steps of love. For instance in the *Mending of Life*:

First therefore we are taught righteousness and corrected of ill by discipline; and after that we know what we should do, or what we should eschew. At the last we savour not fleshly things, but everlasting heavenly and godly (Misyn. p. 209).

Or at greater length in the 8th chapter of *The Form of Living* he sets out three degrees of love. The first he calls 'Insuperable', that is, that it is not conquered by temptation or adversity—'when nothing that is contrary to God's love overcomes it, but it is stalwart against all temptations and stable, whether thou be in ease or anguish'. Secondly, 'Inseparable' love comes 'when all thy heart and thy thought and thy might are so wholly, so entirely, and so perfectly fastened, set and established in Jesus Christ, that thy thought goes never from him'.

The third degree is highest and most wondrous to win. That is called *Singular* for it has no peer. Singular love is when all comfort and solace are closed out of thy heart but that of Jesus Christ alone. It seeks no other joy. . . . Then thy soul is Jesus-loving, Jesus-thinking, Jesus-desiring, only breathing in the desire for him, singing to him, burning for him, resting in him. (*The Form of Living*. Heseltine pp. 35-7).

But it would seem that all these degrees of love are already within the contemplative mould of the illuminative way for he says that even in the first degree a man may say 'I languish for love'. And elsewhere, in the *Fire of Love* he describes the 'heat', the 'song', and the 'sweetness' of this love which he himself experiences.

It is particularly noteworthy that our Lord, the Word Incarnate, plays the central part in this transformation in love. The Blessed Trinity of course lies as background of all thought and of all love, but at this point it is necessary to gather all the human forces into the power of love, and that is achieved in the way God designed by sending his Son as our human brother. This delight in the manhood and Godhead of our Lord inspires all Rolle's Lyrics and these more than any other of his writings influenced the religious thought of the anchorholds and contemplatives as well as the more pious section of the populace of Rolle's day. His vivid picture of the piteous bleeding of Christ in 'My king that was great' is paralleled closely by the whole of Mother Julian's *Revelations* which sprang from the same sort of concrete realisation of the pains of Christ.

Naked is his white breast
and red his bloody side;
wan was his fair hue,
his wounds deep and wide.

His hymns to the Holy Name, his songs of love, his more penitential lyrics like 'All vanities forsake', his hymn to the Creator, all are centred round the person of our Lord who dominates his poetic imagery as well as his love.³ Theologically this movement springs from two important sources. First we find Rolle writing of the Son in relation to the Trinity as God and in relation to ourselves as man.

The Father, Life, getting the Son, Life, has given to Him His whole substance. . . . Truly the everlasting Son of the Father is become Man in Time, born of a maiden, that He might gainbuy man from the fiend's power. This is our Lord Jesus Christ: the which only be fastened in our minds the which for us only was tied on the cross. Nothing truly is so sweet as to love Christ. (*Fire of Love*, Misyn. p. 36).

And he goes on to hint that we should not attempt to plumb too deeply with our minds the mystery of the Trinity, and to be content in this respect with the Son made man, hanging on the Cross. Secondly there is the doctrine of the mystical body which inspired in one way or another the majority of the English Mystics.

Every mortal man ought to consider that he will never come to the heavenly Kingdom by the way of riches and fleshly liking and lust, since, forsooth, it is written of Christ . . . that Christ behoved to suffer and so enter His joy. If we be members of our Head, Jesu Christ, we shall follow Him; and if we love Christ, it behoves us to go as He has gone. (ib. p. 84).

The member of the body is now not merely directed by the head but is in love with the head, conformed to it. His virtuous life is a life of Christ; he acts virtuously because he follows Christ who acts in this way; he accepts the will of the Father because he is in the Garden of Olives watching the sweat of blood moistening the soil of the world. Life now is Christo-centric, to use an awkward but meaningful modern expression. Here may we find a meeting place for all the genuine writers on the spiritual life. St Augustine is as eloquent on the love of Christ as is St Bernard. The 'Imitation' has been considered to be 'unmystical' in tone, and yet the seventh and eighth chapters of the second part have the same accent and tone as Rolle: 'If thou seek Jesu in all things, thou shalt find Jesu. . . . Among all therefore that are dear to thee, let Jesu be solely thy darling and thy special friend'. Or again in the *De Adhaerendo Deo*, attributed to St Albert and almost as formative of pre-reformation spirituality as the 'Imitation', we read: 'There is no other way by which we may be drawn away from outward and sensible things into ourselves and so into the divine secrets of Jesus Christ, than by the love of Christ,

³ For these lyrics cf. the volume, already cited, by F. M. M. Comper.

than by the desire of Christ's sweetness, so that we may feel, perceive and taste the nearness of Christ's divinity'.⁴

Rolle, in his descriptions of the transports of the love of Jesu, however, has not entered into the final union, which has been called beyond all others 'transforming'. He is not relying on feelings or sensible consolations, but he is still very imaginative in his conception of the meaning of union. He recognises its wholeness, and how this love of God embraces every aspect of a man's life bringing with it true integrity (cf. *Fire of Love*. Misyn pp. 99-100). But there is still a certain distance, however brief, between the soul and God, a distance which those who have experienced the heights of love cross with further steps of love. To make this clear we may compare a passage of Richard Rolle with a similar one from the *Living Flame* of St John of the Cross. Thus Rolle writes:

Therefore if our love be pure and perfect, whatever our heart loves it is God. Truly if we love ourself, and all other creatures that are to be loved, only in God and for God, what other in us and in them love we but Him? . . . He that truly knows to love Christ is proved to love nothing in himself but God. Also all that we are loved by and love—all to God the Well of love we yield . . . wherefore nothing but God he loves and so all his love is God (*Fire of Love* i. c. 19. Misyn p. 87).

This fine passage, which brings out a great deal of the nobility of Rolle and his attractiveness, yet suggests that there remains a sense of *otherness*; the soul still feels distinct from God though linked so closely in this deep activity of the will. St John of the Cross, however, in describing the final transformation of love, the most complete that can be attained in this life, would seem to draw out a new meaning in Rolle's words 'all his love is God'. We quote only a short passage from this tremendous description of the union of love: 'For the will of these two is one; and, even as God is giving himself to the soul with free and gracious will, even so likewise the soul having a will that is the freer and the more generous in proportion as it has a greater degree of union with God, is giving God in God to God himself, and thus the gift of the soul to God is true and entire'.⁵

We shall find this further transformation of love more clearly indicated in the two greatest of English mystical writings, *The Cloud of Unknowing* and the *Revelations* of Mother Julian of Norwich. Richard Rolle is in many ways the leader of the mystical movement and often seems to have approximated to the highest forms of love. But these others, perhaps being more hidden and therefore less tempted by the snares of pride, seem to have drawn still closer to the end of all loving.

⁴ *Of Cleaving to God*. Translated by Elizabeth Stopp (Blackfriars Publications).

⁵ *Living Flame of Love*. St. 3. n. 68. Peers vol. iii, p. 101.

THE ENGLISH PSALTER

BY

RICHARD ROLLE

PROLOGUE



REAT abundance of ghostly comfort and joy enters the hearts of those who reverently recite or sing the Psalms in their praising of Jesus Christ. The Psalms drop sweetness into men's souls, pour delight into their minds and enkindle their wills with the fire of love, making them hot and burning within and lovely and beautiful in the eyes of

Christ. And those who persevere in their devotions he raises to the contemplative life and often indeed to the song and joy of heaven. The singing of Psalms puts the devil to flight, moves the angels to come to our assistance, banishes sin, pleases God, fosters perfection, puts away and destroys strife of spirit and makes peace between body and soul. It brings desire for heaven and contempt of earthly things. Truly, this shining book is a choice song before God, a lantern to lighten the darkness of this our life, health for a heart that is sick, honey to a sad soul, the worthiness of spiritual men, the tongue of hidden virtue. It is that which keeps the proud in meekness and kings as subject to beggars, caring for the children of God with a motherly affection. In the Psalms is so much excellence of wisdom and of healthful words that this book is called a garden enclosed, well fenced about, a paradise full of apples. Now with wholesome doctrine it brings driven and storm-tossed souls to a calm sea, now it threatens hell to the wicked. The song that delights hearts and teaches souls becomes a voice in the heavenly choir, and with angels whom we cannot hear we mingle words of praise, so that verily may he think himself far from the true life who has not the joy of this gift of wonderful sweetness, which grows not sour through the corruptions of this world but is everlasting in its worth, increasing by grace to the purest of sweetness. All gladness and earthly pleasures vanish away and at last fade to nothingness, but this book grows more and more enjoyable with time and, when love is most perfect, is most precious at the time of a man's death.

This book is called the Psalter, which name it takes from a musical instrument that in Hebrew is called 'Nablum' and in Greek a 'psalter' of song'. In English the word 'psalter' means 'to touch'. The instrument has ten strings and gives out a sound when it is plucked by the hand. So this book instructs us how to keep the ten Commandments and to work not for an earthly end but for heaven that is above. And so we give forth sounds that rise up at the touch of our hands when all that we do well is for the love of God. Also, this book is

divided into three sections of fifty Psalms, in which the three states of a Christian's religion are symbolised. The first is penance, the second righteous living, the third love of endless life. The first fifty end in '*miserere mei deus*', the second in '*miser cordiam et iudicium cantabo tibi domine*', the third at '*omnis spiritus laudet dominum*'. This book is most used of all the holy writings in the service of Holy Church because it is the perfection of divine writing. For it contains all that the other books set out at length—the teaching of the Old Testament and of the New. Therein are described the rewards of good men, the torments of evil men, the discipline of penance, the growing in godly life, the perfection of holy men which reaches to heaven, the life of active men, the meditation of religious and the joy of contemplation, the highest that may befall a mortal man. Also, whatever sin takes from a man's soul, penance restores. There is no need to tell all this here, for you will find it set forth in the right place. This book of Psalms is called the book of the hymns of Christ. A hymn is the praising of God with song. Three things appertain to a hymn—the praising of God, the joying of the heart or mind, and an earnest desire for God's love. Song is a great gladness of mind in eternity and endless joy, breaking into the voice of praise. Well then is it called the book of hymns, for it instructs us to love God with gaiety and joy and sweetness of soul, not in the heart alone but also in the utterance of praise, teaching the ignorant.

The matter of this book is Christ and his spouse, who is Holy Church or the soul of every righteous man. Its purpose is to turn to Christ in a newness of life those who are defiled in Adam. The manner of teaching is thus: sometimes it speaks of Christ in his divinity, sometimes in his manhood, sometimes in those things for which he uses the voice of his servants. Also, sometimes it speaks of Holy Church in three ways: sometimes in the person of perfect men, sometimes in that of imperfect men, sometimes in that of evil men who are members of Holy Church in body but not in thought, by name and not by deed, in number and not in merit.

In this work I seek after no highflown language, but the easiest and most colloquial and that which is most like to the Latin, so that people who do not know Latin may be introduced to many Latin words through their English forms. In the translation I follow the literal meaning as much as I can and when I find no exact English equivalent I follow the general sense of the word so that they can read it and not fear making a mistake. In exposition I follow the doctors of the Church, for the book may fall into the hands of some malicious man who will declare that I did not know what I was saying and so do harm to himself and to others if he despise a work that is most profitable to him and everyone else.

PSALM 56.

Miserere mei deus, miserere mei, quoniam in te confidit anima mea. 'Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me: for my soul trusteth in thee'. Have mercy on me so that I rise out of all sin, have mercy on me so that I bear tribulation, for my soul trusts in thee, not in itself, yearning for thy love.

Et in umbra alarum tuarum sperabo donec transeat iniquitas. 'And in the shadow of thy wings will I hope, until iniquity pass away'. In the overshadowing and coolness of thy mercy I hope to be saved from the heat of my desires. 'Until iniquity pass away', that is to say, until the end of the world, for always until then wickedness will not lack fuel.

Clamabo ad deum altissimum, deum qui benefecit mihi. 'I will cry to God most high: to God who hath done good to me'. I will not be idle, but I will cry with all the strength of my heart to the most high God, because I needs must cry to him. But I have proved his goodness for he who heard my cry was merciful to me.

Misit de caelo et liberavit me, dedit in opprobrium conculcantes me. 'He hath sent from heaven and delivered me: he hath made them a reproach that trod upon me'. He sent his Son from heaven and through him delivered me from the devil's prison, and 'them that trod upon me', which means the devil and his brood who torment righteous men, he committed to the shame of endless pain.

Misit deus misericordiam suam et veritatem suam et eripuit animam meam de medio catulorum leonum. Dormivi conturbatus. 'God hath sent his mercy and his truth: and he hath delivered my soul from the midst of the young lions. I slept troubled'. 'God hath sent his mercy and his truth' to my soul, forgiving my sins and punishing me mercifully, and so he 'delivered me', who was bound in chains of sin, 'from the midst of the young lions', from the common life of the lovers of this world who are the devil's whelps. Among them 'I slept', or I rested in vices, in filth and sin. But I was 'troubled' by them, that is, annoyed, which made me depart from them sooner and haste me to God.

Filii hominum dentes eorum arma et sagitte et lingua eorum gladius acutus. 'The sons of men, whose teeth are weapons and arrows, and their tongues a sharp sword'. 'The sons of men', that is to say, have grown old in malice, 'whose teeth', meaning the gnashings of their teeth in backbiting, are the 'weapons' with which they defend themselves in their fight against God, and the 'arrows' that they use to hurt each other. And 'their tongue', their scandalising speech, is a sharp sword slaying souls.

Laqueum paraverunt pedibus meis et incurvaverunt animam meam. 'They prepared a snare for my feet: and they bowed down my soul'.

That is, they set the snare of damnation for my soul under the guise of bodily pleasure and 'they bowed down my soul', they thought to make it stoop down to earth, away from the love of God.

Foderunt ante faciem meam foveam et inciderunt in eam. 'They dug a pit before my face: and they are fallen into it'. In other words, they worked diligently to make me know the lust of the flesh so that I might be captured, for it is a deep pit to all that pursue it, and 'they are fallen into it'. They hurt themselves, not me, for I realised that the joy of this world is but as a flower of the field.

Paratum cor meum deus, paratum cor meum. Cantabo et psalmum dicam. 'My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready: I will sing and rehearse a psalm'. They prepared pits and snares, but my heart is ready, O God, to do thy bidding, my heart is ready to suffer anguish for thy love. I will sing to thy praise in spiritual joy, and I will rehearse a psalm showing praise in thy honour. . . .

Exsurge gloria mea, exsurge psalterium et cythara. Exurgam diluculo. 'Arise, O my glory: arise psalter and harp: I will arise early'. That is to say, Jesu, who is my joy, makes me rise up in joy at the song of thy praising, in gladness of thy praising and, that it may be so, 'Arise psalter', which is gladness of mind about the life of contemplation. 'Arise harp', which is the purging of all vices with patience in tribulation. Thus I will arise early'; I will rise with joy at the general resurrection.

Jesu, be thou my joy, all melody and sweetness,
And teach me how to sing
The song of thy praising.

Confitebor tibi in populis, domine, et psalmum dicam tibi in gentibus. 'I will confess thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing a psalm to thee among the nations'. Namely, I will love thee in my conversation with men and acknowledge the work of heaven among the people,

While in wondrous verse I sing
The desire for thy praising.

Quoniam magnificata est usque ad celos misericordia tua, et usque ad nubes veritas tua. 'For thy mercy is magnified even to the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds'. When men who were wretches shall be made equal with the angels at the resurrection through the mercy of God, then is his mercy magnified even to the heavens, and when the knowledge of God's truth, which is perfect in the angels, shall enlighten men, then does his truth reach even to the clouds.

Exaltare super celos deus, et super omnem terram gloria tua. 'Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens and thy glory above all the

earth'. The Psalmist now repeats what he has just said, strengthening our faith.

PSALM 61, VERSE 2.

Nam et ipse deus meus et salutare meum; susceptor meus, non movebor amplius. 'For he is my God and my saviour. He is my protector; I shall be moved no more'. Truly, he is my salvation, for he is my God by grace, and my saviour, which means 'my redeemer', and he raises me from the troubles of this world to heavenly joy. Therefore I shall no more be moved from him, because

No greater joy I crave
Than in my heart to have
The love of his praising.
This is the better part—
Keep Jesu in thy heart
And want no other thing.

Done into modern English from the Thornton MS. by
HILARY FROOMBERG.

NOTE ON ROLLE'S LANGUAGE IN HIS PSALTER

Rolle declares, in his Prologue to his Psalter, that in his exposition he aims at a style that is easy and colloquial rather than highflown and one that will, at the same time, introduce those of his readers who know no Latin to a knowledge of that language. Therefore he will use English words most like to the Latin ones. An introduction of sixty long alliterative lines in couplets says that the work was undertaken by Rolle at the request of Margaret Kirkby, a recluse. Hence the necessity for an exposition in English, since women were not expected to be as familiar with Latin as men. But, for the religious life, a knowledge of Latin was useful, to say the least of it, and so he endeavoured to give some rudimentary instruction. The result of this mixed aim is an attempt to reconcile two irreconcilable dictions, the colloquial and the Latinate. Consequently this experimental English style is inclined to be clumsy and unidiomatic and lacking in flexibility although there are excellent patches where the colloquial phrases remind us that the work was addressed to an intimate friend or where the matter becomes infused with his own fervent and romantic mysticism. Only occasionally does he remember to help the weaker brethren in the acquisition of Latin, possibly because his own Latin was not of the best. There is, however, a startling example of such tuition in his exposition of the second verse of Psalm 61. He translates '*salutare meum*' as 'mi saveour' and then adds, 'pat is, mi bier', which means literally, 'that is, my buyer'. According to the *New English Dictionary* the use of the word 'bier' in this theological context is first found in 1300 in the Early English

(Surtees) Psalter. It occurs again in the 14th century in one of Wyclif's sermons and then, later in 1410, in Nicolas Love's 'Bonaventure's Life of Christ'. After which the word appears to have become obsolete. The word 'bier' is of Old English derivation and by employing it Rolle is assisting his reader to associate the English word with that word of Latin origin which has the same meaning, 'saveour'. What he does not do is to demonstrate explicitly the connection between the Latin '*salutare*' and its Anglicised derivative 'saveour'. As the English word 'buyer' in this usage has dropped out of the language another latinism, 'redeemer', must be used in a modern translation.

Note on the Lollard Revisions of Rolle's Psalter (cf. J. E. Wells, *Manual of Middle English Writings*).

In the latter part of the 14th century a revision of Rolle's Commentary was made to suit the needs of Lollards but was still palmed off as Rolle's. The prologue is kept, the text of the Psalms is little modified; but in the commentary gradually more and more matter of the Wycliffite type is added, the expansion becoming extensive and Rolle's comments being practically lost. Still later the Lollard Psalter was cut down, the controversial matter and attacks on the clergy being eliminated or generalised. Miss Emily Hope Allen notes that the nuns of Hampole kept an autograph copy of Rolle's Psalter chained in their priory for authentic reference.

HILARY FROMMBERG.

REVIEWS

A NOTE ON THE SPIRITUAL ASPECT OF SCHOLARSHIP
ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI: THE LEGENDS AND LAUDS. Edited by Otto
Karrer; Trans. by N. Wydenbruck. (Sheed and Ward; 15s.)

From the mass of material that makes up Franciscan sources Mr Otto Karrer has made large and judicious selections to form a catena of representative excerpts such as, for the general reader and in a single book, may stand for the whole corpus of early Franciscan literature. And for the general reader he has, I think, admirably succeeded. There is little the reader will have missed when he has mastered all that is here given him from the *Legend of the Three Companions*, from Celano I and II, from Sabatier's and from Lemmens's edition of the *Speculum* and from Delorme's *Legenda Antiqua*, from St Bonaventure, from the *Fioretti* and from the Writings of St Francis himself. The whole has been clearly and readably translated by Miss Nora Wydenbruck.

Mr Karrer is perhaps a little ambitious when he claims that his collection forms a kind of Franciscan canon—he actually likens it to the New Testament! And his work will probably be of less use to scholars than he hopes. Essential to true scholarship is the independent judgment of a man who has read carefully *all* the original sources that exist; and the reader should be warned (which indeed Mr Karrer does not fail to do), that a book of not more than three hundred and twenty pages of English print must omit much that is pertinent to the fascinating problems of authorship and date that Paul Sabatier first set for our puzzling out more than fifty years ago.

Scholars too will raise an eyebrow at the complete confidence with which Mr Karrer identifies the *Legend of the Three Companions* with the lost legend of John of Ceprano, apparently mainly on the ground that Ceprano, as Bernard a Bessa tells us, began with the words *quasi stella matutina*, and two manuscripts of the *Three Companions* treat the same theme in a foreword. It is not unlikely that other lost sources began with the same words, for they are the opening words of the text from Ecclesiasticus of the Pope's sermon at the canonisation of the Saint. Their appropriateness made an impression, and they came to be identified with Francis; they have for many centuries formed the *Gradual* of St Francis's Mass.

But if Mr Karrer's reading is perhaps wider than his scholarship is profound, this has not prevented his offering us a quite competent introduction to each of the seven sections that divide his matter, together with notes upon each and a sound prefatory essay to the whole. The result is a thoroughly representative anthology of early Franciscan literature and a very fair setting forth of the main Franciscan literary problem, for that general reader to whom such books as this are principally addressed.

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The appearance of yet another book on St Francis tempts one to offer a note upon a subject that is highly relevant to the purpose of a journal like *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT*—I mean the moral and spiritual side of scholarship. It is something that is never denied but never emphasised, because the emphasis is all upon the freedom of the scholar, upon his right to know all and to publish all he knows without fear or favour. But this very freedom surely involves a great responsibility to truth. The smaller the pressure he suffers from without the more the scholar is bound to control all within him that might substitute the desire of his heart for the plain truth as it is. Here, it is true, if men differ, it is mainly in emphasis; but the emphasis in practice often makes an enormous difference. All agree that the student—of history, for example—must be free and that he must be responsible. But which of these two comes first? Much modern writing would suggest that it is the freedom that comes first and that if a scholar is free to work out his subject in his own way, the truth is bound to emerge. It is the large manner of generous man-trusting Liberalism—and, to take only the course of Franciscan studies in the last half-century, it has had some curious results.

The story of the life-work of Paul Sabatier is very instructive. No man ever approached his subject with greater personal candour or with a greater desire to learn all that was to be known about St Francis; no man ever came to love his subject more than this very able writer came to love the *Poverello*. His eight years of immensely painstaking research and his growing love and admiration of Francis stimulated a very marked literary gift to the production of a book of rare power and beauty.

And yet, amid much enthusiastic eulogy, Professor Little in a quiet understatement can say of the book: 'There is a modicum of truth in (the) accusation' that 'to put it crudely Sabatier had read himself into his hero and had represented St Francis as a liberal Protestant of the nineteenth century. Sabatier discusses the question of objectivity and subjectivity at some length . . . "to write history" (he says) "one must think it, and to think it is to transform it. . . . Objective history is a Utopia. We create God in our own image, and we impress the mark of our own personality where one least expects to find it. . . . Love is the key to history".'

The historian of St Francis might have reflected that the God we worship infinitely transcends the poor image of him that we set up in our minds; that he is adored as Truth itself; and that love of Truth would be a better description of the key that unlocks the secrets of history.

Professor Little goes on: 'Sabatier was I think the first to recognise the paramount importance of St Francis's own writings as authorities for his life and thought . . . but I, for one, certainly did not realise from the *Vie de St François* the undoubted fact that the central subject of all the general letters of St Francis was the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ'.

Quidquid recipitur per modum recipientis recipitur. Sabatier wrote in the heyday of Hegelian philosophy. His was a voice straight from the quite enormous self-confidence of nineteenth century Liberalism. The picture of the thirteenth century that he offers us in his Introduction is exactly the picture we would expect from a liberal Frenchman of the eighties moulded (despite racial dislikes) upon Prussian thought and Prussian history. Its stresses and omissions, its contemptuous picture of endless thirteenth and fourteenth century wars and bickerings (written in that late nineteenth century lull that Progressivists readily mistook for the dawn of universal peace), his determined confronting of an exterior religion of Papacy and priesthood with an interior religion of the Spirit, are all in the best nineteenth century Prussian tradition.

'In the thirteenth century', he says, 'the priest is the very antithesis of the saint; he is nearly always his enemy. Set apart from the rest of men by holy unction, presenting himself as the ambassador of an Almighty Deity, able to accomplish unspeakable mysteries by certain simple actions, capable of changing bread into flesh and wine into blood with a word, he stands forth as a sort of idol who can do everything for you or against you, and before whom you can only bow down in trembling adoration. The saint on the contrary is one whose clothing proclaims nothing of his mission but whose life and words command the hearts and consciences of all. . . . Without charge of souls in the Church, he feels an interior impulse to raise his voice. A child of the people, he understands all their moral and material anguish. . . . These saints of the thirteenth century are veritable prophets. Like St Paul, apostles not by any canonical consecration but by the interior order of the Spirit, they were the champions of liberty against authority.'

Now Sabatier had already read and felt the significance of the Testament of St Francis. It is the most unsolicited and spontaneous, the most completely personal and self-revealing of all St Francis's writings; and near the beginning it contains this passage: 'The Lord gave and gives me such faith in priests who live according to the form of the Holy Roman Church . . . that even if they were to persecute me I would adhere to them. And if I had all the wisdom of Solomon and met poor little secular priests (*pauperculos sacerdotes hujus seculi*) I would not preach in their parishes against their wishes. Them and all priests I desire to fear, love and honour as my masters. And in them I will not consider sin, because I recognise in them the Son of God; and they are my masters. This I do for this reason, for in this world I see nothing corporally of the most high Son of God except His most Holy Body and Blood which they consecrate and which they alone administer to others.'

This is plainly to say that his spiritual life (what Sabatier would call his 'sainthood'), far from setting him in any kind of opposition to the clergy, was the very source of his deep attachment to them. This is the only meaning we can extract from the words 'the Lord

gave and gives me', etc., 'I recognise in them the Son of God', 'His most holy Body and Blood which they consecrate', etc. There is simply no question but that the attitude of Francis to the clergy was as different as it well could be from the attitude of Sabatier's 'saint'. The pains Francis takes to particularise his attitude are for us conclusive.

The sentence in which Sabatier describes the saint as the 'champion of liberty against authority' is ominous. Here Professor Little, who besides an admirer shows himself an able critic of Sabatier's doctrine, largely agrees with the biographer, and he describes an alleged struggle of Francis with the Ministers over 'power and authority' as 'a gallant attempt to include in the Rule itself an assertion of the rights of the individual conscience within a community'. Francis was immensely occupied with the freedom of the subject to observe the Rule in absolute poverty, even against relaxing Ministers: but there is not a particle of evidence to show that he was interested in freedom in the abstract, freedom as an end in itself, in the manner of some of his modern admirers. For him, the end and purpose of the human spirit was subjection to and union with God; and freedom was essential to this, for only in freedom could a spirit give itself to God. We are back at the question—which comes first, the liberty or the service of God? For Francis there could of course be only one answer—God and His service undoubtedly came first and the freedom was but the indispensable means to that end. It is a little one-sided to write as though a man exercised the freedom of his conscience when he defied authority and not when he obeyed it.

Of obedience, Francis in the Testament says: 'It is my firm purpose to obey the Minister General of this fraternity and the Guardian he may choose to give me. And I wish to be so much a captive in his hands that I can neither move nor act beyond obedience and his will; for he is my master'. A strange pronouncement of one who was 'the champion of liberty against authority'.

There is more that might be questioned in the fascinating *Vie de St François d'Assise* that took the world by storm in 1893 and became the starting-point of so much solid historical study; but enough has been set down to establish a thesis that in fact nobody questions, that scholarship needs more than exhaustive learning, endlessly patient time and application, vivid historic imagination and deep love of the subject. It needs a sleepless guard upon self, a great intellectual self-denial, a ruthless uprooting of even the dearest preconceptions, upon the demand of truth; in a word, it needs a great assertion of moral and spiritual integrity. This is sauce for goose and gander, and Catholic scholarship has sometimes shown itself peculiarly deficient in these very qualities. When Paul Sabatier realised some of the shortcomings of his work, he made whatever honourable *amende* he could. In an interesting lecture at Kensington in 1908 he says: 'Those who would rely on such passages in works of St Francis (those namely which assert his immediate

dependence upon God and the rights of the individual conscience, etc.) to make him a sort of forerunner of Protestantism, would be completely wrong. I know it is a reproach which has been made to me. If I have deserved it, I regret it, and I will try to repair my fault'. Not all of our Catholic historians have behaved so honourably.

ETHELBERT CARDIFF, O.F.M.

OF CLEAVING TO GOD (*De Adhaerendo Deo*). Attributed to Saint Albert the Great, translated with Preface by Elizabeth Stopp. (Blackfriars; 2s.)

This little work is a new translation of the Latin text written at the beginning of the fifteenth century, and formerly attributed to St Albert the Great. Though Professor Grabmann has returned to the traditional view of attributing the authorship to St Albert in the first instance, the tract in its present form cannot be his. The compilation, which contains a number of borrowed passages, is the work of a religious and a cleric, possibly of a monk of the Rhineland region, done for his own use. Whatever may be said of its origin it is strongly Dionysian in trend. The way to contemplation requires detachment from all earthly things, which in the concrete is to 'cast out of your mind the impressions, images and forms of all things which are not God; for once you have stripped your understanding, your heart and your will, your prayer will simply be looking upon God within you' (p. 17). One cannot help wondering whether this effort, involving as it seems to do a psychological contortion, is not liable, if self-imposed from without, to induce a state of mental vacuum akin to madness, unless there is at the same time an over-mastering influence coming from within when the soul has already become divinely impressionable through the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. There is always some danger especially in beginners of out-running the measure of grace, and therefore of failure by way of breakdown through excess. The premature attempt to darken the ill-instructed mind may and does end oftentimes in disaster. Evidently the cloud of unknowing is not the way for all and sundry, and the following of the way of negation implies a deepening of perception into truths already known. It is extremely difficult to see how certain aspects of the Incarnation are not emptied of their value and divine purpose when the use of the imagination is regarded as a waste of time. Not only St Thomas the theologian but St Teresa the mystic give due place to the imagination in the search for God. The liturgical worship of God in the life of the Church, with sacrifice as its centre, and the Christian materialism of the Sacraments and sacramentals, are agencies not only for hallowing the soul of man, but of arousing him through the senses and imagination even to the higher flights of the contemplative life.

¹ See *Paul Sabatier* in *Franciscan Papers*, by A. G. Little.

Again the Rosary is a striking example of how the various faculties are to be employed in dwelling on the mysteries of faith.

That love is the mainspring of contemplation is later shown, and it is this which inspires recollection and is inculcated earlier on.

The emphasis which is placed on the overwhelming providence of God in the life of the spirit is a wholesome antidote to some modern forms of anti-pelagianism whether theological or otherwise, which over-stress the need of human devices or bring the natural and the supernatural within a single plane. Not even the human will, despite its freedom, can escape the over-ruling mastery of divine providence. Indeed, 'nothing, from the greatest to the least, escapes the eternal providence of God, nor swerves from its course, whether in nature or in the acts of the will, or in events that appear casual and fortuitous, or have been ordained by him' (p. 55).

There are some splendid passages on the love of God and its relation to contemplation. 'The Contemplation of the saints, is for the sake of love itself, that is, of God, who is the object of contemplation . . . the saints have the love of God as the chief end of their contemplation' (p. 35). This is the love of the contemplated spoken of by St Thomas.

'It is love only that turns us to God, transforms us into God, by which we cleave to God and are united to him, so that we become one spirit with him; and by love only do we enter into bliss, by grace from and through him in this life and by glory in the next. Love cannot find rest except in the beloved, when it enters upon full and peaceful possession of its treasure. For this love, which is charity, is the way by which God comes down to man, and by which man ascends to God. God cannot dwell where there is no love. If, therefore, we have love, we have God, for "God is love". . . The soul is more truly where it loves than where it lives, for it dwells in the beloved as far as its own nature goes. its understanding and will; but it dwells in the body only *in* its form, and in this it is not above the animal creation' (pp. 42, 43, 44). More accurately the soul dwells in the body by animating it *as* its form.

The translator has done her work exceedingly well, and her translation runs smoothly and pleasingly. Perhaps it would have been safer to say 'God is the exemplar of the soul' rather than the 'form' (p. 16). There is a useful preface and the printing is good. An index of sources to which reference is made in the preface would have thrown light on the text.

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

WESTWARD BY COMMAND. By Marie Cotter. (Mercier Press; 10s. 6d.)

Westward by Command is not a life of Mother Cabrini—it is rather a catalogue of her movements and becomes boring through 'monotony in the sameness of actual facts' (p. 140). Of the real woman and saint we learn very little, and 'The Counsels of Mother Cabrini' make one wonder why they are given as an appendix and why the

eulogy of her writings on page 94. In the Preface, the authoress warns that any life of Mother Cabrini 'calls for thundering adjectives—tremendous, stupendous, astounding', and at first one fears that the call will be answered though ultimately only the temptation to clichés is yielded to.

Bishop Scalabrini is suddenly elevated to the Red Hat (p. 92), but humbly resumes his mitre on the next page, and was the unnamed Jesuit (p. 49) really a Canon of Crema? The writer apparently does not know when Pope Leo XIII called Mother Cabrini a saint. It is attributed (p. 72) to her first audience with him, but later (p. 136) it is given quite definitely as following her audience with him in 1898—*incidentally*, that audience is described as her 'final audience' though she had 'more than one' during the following year.

This book may, however, whet one's appetite for a more worthy life of Mother Cabrini: her rule of never refusing a postulant on account of poor health, of disregarding her seemingly inspired dreams, and the fact that she apparently never learned that tedious phrase of so many religious when asked to perform some extra good work, 'I'm sorry, but the rules do not allow it', make her an interesting person, although, as she said of Blessed Marianna of Lima, she has probably not been raised up for our imitation.

TERENCE TANNER.

HENRY SUSO. By S.M.C. (Blackfriars Publications; 6s. 6d.)

The attractiveness of a saint is the measure in which he radiates God, and the by no means easy task of the hagiographer is to express and interpret the life of a saint in terms of the love of God. In her recent book S. M. C. gives us a study of the life of Henry Suso, and succeeds in showing us a man deeply in love with Eternal Wisdom. Like his divine Master, Henry Suso had to pay the price if he would win souls from evil. At first, as a young Dominican, already marked out as a student of talent and ability, Suso was disinclined to pay the full price demanded for perfection. Like another Augustine, it was the inspired word of God (read to him whilst at table) that decided him. From henceforth, he resolved, to none save Eternal Wisdom would he give allegiance.

Now a man in love with God will often, through the very excess of love he experiences, so act as to cause the worldly wise to sneer and deride him for a fool. His penances and mortifications are laughed at as being the acts of a fanatic. Maybe it is folly, but it is the folly of the Cross. In her treatment of the severe penances Suso inflicted on himself, S. M. C. shows judgment that is sympathetic, balanced and enlightening. It can so easily happen that the written life of a saint presents him as someone unreal, or forbidding and repelling through inadequate evaluation of his ascetical practices and any special divine favours that may be granted him.

Bl. Henry's apprenticeship as the true disciple of Christ was long

and exacting, but finally he emerged as God's troubadour, the 'Minnesinger'. Extracts from his works, clearly set forth in different type, are given in Latin and English, and amply repay study. Perhaps they will tempt someone to re-edit (a work overdue) his classical volumes on Eternal Wisdom. In setting forth the years of apostolic preaching, when he played no small part in rightly orientating the movement of mysticism that developed in the Rhineland during the 14th century, we are helped to appreciate Bl. Henry's contribution by a number of short historical sketches. In her contribution to this series of Dominican saints, S. M. C. gives us a thoughtful and prayerful study of a Dominican who has long been neglected.

TERENCE NETHERWAY, O.P.

HUGH EDMUND FORD (First Abbot of Downside). By Dom Bruno Hicks (Fifth Abbot of Downside). (Sands; 7s. 6d.)

This little book on Abbot Ford by one who knew him well and was later one of his successors is a welcome tribute to a remarkable man. Hugh Edmund Ford was in the school at Downside and was clothed for that House in the Common Noviciate at Belmont in 1868. From the outset his career was out of the ordinary. The régime at Belmont was Spartan and it soon became clear that his health would not stand it, and indeed that he would never be equal to the full monastic observance. It showed remarkable foresight in his superiors that he was nevertheless allowed to make his Profession on January 25th, 1870. Already by 1871 his health was such that he was recalled to Downside. He continued his studies there and also worked in the school, and was allowed to make his Solemn Profession in 1873 in spite of still indifferent health. A long sea voyage was recommended by the doctors, and in October 1873 he set off for Australia with Archbishop Vaughan, the new Coadjutor of Sydney. In a largely open-air life lived for the most part under pioneer conditions he never lost his ideals of the monastic life, and in 1876 he returned to Downside with much improved health. Two years later, already a priest, the new Prior, Dom Aidan Gasquet, afterwards Cardinal, appointed him Prefect of Studies, a post which in the organisation of the catholic schools of those days carried with it most of the responsibilities of Headmaster. He at once reorganised the studies, introducing lay-masters to help with the teaching, with markedly successful results.

It was about this time, 1880, that a controversy began over the constitution of the English Benedictine Congregation which was to last twenty years and in which Father Edmund Ford played a leading part. Looking back from this distance it is easy to see that the Congregation had to develop along the lines which it eventually took, but in order to understand the opposition which was aroused it is necessary to realise the historical development which had led to the existing state of affairs. During the 17th and 18th centuries the

monasteries were in France and the principal work of the Congregation was on the English Mission. In the circumstances it was impossible for the Priors in France to control the missions, and when a man left his monastery to go on the mission it was no doubt necessary for him to come under the President who ruled the missions with two Provincials. But in fact the President with General Chapter meeting every four years virtually ruled the monasteries as well, for, except in the event of death or resignation, all superiors were elected at the Chapter, and the President had the power to move a monk from the monastery to the mission at will, and moreover could transfer a monk from one monastery to another. With the monasteries in England the reasons for this state of affairs had largely ceased to exist, and in the last years of the 19th century a strong feeling grew up among some of the younger men at Downside that a return should be made to the more traditional Benedictine system of strictly autonomous houses electing their own superiors, who should have authority over their subjects whether they were in the monastery or on the mission. Of this movement Father Edmund Ford quickly became the leader.

In 1885 Prior Gasquet resigned his Priorship at Downside and in these circumstances the community elected a Prior to rule till the next General Chapter. They elected Father Edmund Ford, who held office until 1888. But in that year General Chapter refused to appoint him again and he went on the mission at Beccles in Suffolk. He did noteworthy work here in building up a parish from almost nothing. In 1894 under special legislation pending changes in the constitutions he was again elected Prior of Downside and remained in that position till 1900, when he was elected first Abbot of Downside. Ill health, which had pursued him all his life, compelled him to resign from the Abbacy in 1906, though for ten years after that he was Superior at Ealing.

Such were the main facts of Abbot Ford's career, and they are related clearly and succinctly in this book, the extremely delicate matter of the constitutional controversy being dealt with together in a single chapter. In this matter Abbot Ford, or Father Ford as he was then, was in the very difficult position of a religious leading opposition to his superiors. The real proof of his qualities as a man and a religious was in the way in which he did this. He never used other than constitutional means and he always accepted the decisions of his superiors with humility and obedience, but he never gave up the fight. In his old age to an intimate friend he gave away perhaps the secret of his success in carrying through the task he had undertaken. From his early monastic life he had cultivated the habit of seeing Christ in all men, and so it was that in the height of the controversy he could write to a friend that their differences of opinion never affected his dealings with his brethren outside the Chapter-room. Owing to his poor health he expressly stated that he did not want to be considered for the Abbacy and it is proof of what the

community thought of him that they elected him in spite of this.

The difficulty about all such controversies is that there are good men on both sides. Abbot Ford always recognised that those who were anxious to maintain the *status quo* were good priests working hard for souls, and it should be stated that when Rome eventually promulgated the new constitutions they accepted them loyally to a man. At the same time under the old system the Congregation was practically conceived as a body of parish clergy who were regulars and who received a special training in the monastery before going out on the mission, which is not the traditional view of the Benedictine life. The present work sets out the controversy with great fairness and moderation, but the pity is really that the book as a whole is not on a larger scale. The subject, especially in view of the period in which he lived and the part he played in events, was worthy of a full-length biography, though unfortunately much of the material that should have gone to it has not been preserved. A short life necessarily always becomes rather a catalogue of virtues and achievements which, however true to facts, tends to become a bit unconvincing after a time to a reader who never knew the man concerned. Similarly a more or less summary treatment in separate chapters at the end of writings, religious teaching, and characteristics, is much less satisfactory than allowing all these elements of the character to emerge gradually in a full-length treatment. However, within its limits the book is excellent, and it does appear to justify the description given of Abbot Ford by Bishop Burton in a public speech as 'the founder of modern Downside'.
F.G.S.

THE SONG OF THE CHURCH. By Marie Pierik. (Burns Oates; 21s.)

The arts of the classical but pagan ages presuppose the perfection of human nature. The arts of the Christians, proceeding from the minds of artists illumined by Faith, are the fruit of Faith and presuppose that human nature is not by any means perfect, but wounded. Even, therefore, in the Art of the Christian, will the mortification of the Cross be visible.

It is curious to notice that whenever Christians—as for example at the time of the Renaissance—have fixed their gaze excessively and courteously on the arts of the non-Christian world, they have lost the sense of the Cross, and with it the taste for specifically Christian arts.

One becomes amazingly conscious of this when reading the well-written chapter on Latin Hymnody in Marie Pierik's recent book, 'The Song of the Church'. One of the greatest of Christian arts is the Gregorian Chant. And this book on the Chant is well worth reading, and from the point of view of absorbing interest is probably one of the best popular books yet written in English. In it, however, there seem to be things which are somewhat puzzling.

Would it be possible perhaps that the author is saying that because the melody of the Chant has grown out of the Latin words (even out

of the accents of the words if you like), therefore it is the rhythm of the words which produces the rhythm of the melody? Further, would it appear to follow that she says that there is no rhythm of the melody distinct from the rhythm of the words, which she proves is caused by accents? She does indeed speak of (on page 225) '... the rhythm of the word, which is also that of Plainchant'. She also does remind us insistently 'that the first syllable of the Latin word acted as the generator of the rhythm of the word itself by virtue of its quality of accentuation', and then adds significantly that 'in like manner, in *modelling itself upon the word*, the first note of the neum—the *musical word*—serves as generator of the rhythm of the neum equally by virtue of its quality of *accentuation*'. (cf. page 229).

Again, she does go to great pains to belittle and to cast doubts on the word accent being originally a Tonic accent. It is true that the Latin accent eventually became a strong and vigorous rhythmic accent, but, nevertheless, is not one of the beauties of the Chant the way the melody rises to bring out the accents and at times by way of contrast even falls in manifesting them? Have not the composers of Plainsong even exercised the cunning of their art in, it would appear, deliberately contrasting the rhythm of the words with the rhythm of the melody? Would it be too much to say that a beautiful example of this is in, let us say, the '*Dies irae*'?

Perhaps, however, Miss Pierik really does hold that there is a rhythm of the *melody* (even of the neums) quite distinct from the rhythm of the *words*, but if so, why does she take such trouble to build up her thesis of the rhythmic importance of the word accent? It is precisely the successful blending of the rhythm of the melody with the rhythm of the words that makes the outstanding beauty of the Chant.

A last question. Does the author hold or not hold that every second syllable counting back from the Tonic accent is a secondary accent; not necessarily a secondary tonic accent but certainly a rhythmic accent? Why then does she impress upon us so emphatically the rule for accenting the first syllable? Is it, for example, '*misericórdia*' (cf. page 243) or is it '*miséricórdia*'?

On page 249 Miss Pierik quotes the saying that the Liturgy is the theology of the people and that Plainchant is the sung prayer of the people. (cf. page 226). The Liturgy *was* the theology of the people and the Chant *was* the sung prayer of the people, but not now. The Liturgy could be and should be the people's theology, and likewise the Chant could be and should be the people's sung prayer, but this will not be until Christian Latin is raised to its rightful position in our education even in primary schools—far *above* classical Latin. Christian Latin is a work of Christian art, the fruit of Faith. We must cease to look down upon the essentially Christian Latin of the Church!

With the Latin of the Church must be taught, in the simple unfolding of the Liturgy, the proper song of the people—Gregorian

Chant. Unless this becomes an integral part of our education and outlook even from our childhood, all the Liturgical revival with the fostering of what was formerly the prayer song of the people (Gregorian Chant) will be, if not fiddling while Rome is burning, at least making art for art's sake *interfere* with art for souls starving for grace! The greatest enemies of the Liturgy and the Chant are some of its enthusiasts.

Notwithstanding the criticisms, Marie Pierik's 'Song of the Church' is an admirable contribution to popular English literature on the subject and its careful perusal is well worth while. The format of the book is attractive.

JUSTIN FIELD, O.P.

PAPAL LEGATE AT THE COUNCIL OF TRENT. By Rt Rev. Hubert Jedin.
Translated by F. C. Eckhoff. (Herder; n.p.)

Seripando is a romantic name and when linked with the stirring history of the sixteenth-century Church it might spell almost anything from a pirate to a papal legate. And in fact it is the name of one of the most sturdy and perhaps least romantic of the high ecclesiastics of the Reformation period. A Neapolitan, he tried to join the Dominican friars where St Thomas had preceded him, but unlike St Thomas his parents dissuaded him, and when he returned to his religious vocation it was to become an Observantine Augustinian in the same city. He was only fifteen then, but that did not prevent his having a wide classical education as well as a thorough grounding in theology at the university of Bologna and from his acquaintance with such men as Cardinal Cajetan. He was from the first a favourite of the General of his Order, and was very early given posts of responsibility. He found himself eventually General of his Order, a staunch upholder of reform in those turbulent days, and therefore without much chance of increasing his theological wisdom. But being already General in 1545 he necessarily took part in the first gatherings of the Council of Trent. This was to be the crowning work of his life. In the first period of the Council he worked hard and played a leading part in all the major discussions on Justification, the Scriptures, Original Sin. In the interim before the second convention of the Council he was made Archbishop of Salerno and was able to do a great work of reform there. Pius IV then elevated Seripando to the college of cardinals and in view of his great experience in the first sessions at Trent he was sent as papal representative to work with the two other legates on the momentous questions of the Mass, Communion and Papal Primacy. He died before the Council was concluded but it will be seen what a central part he played in the most important activity of the counter-reformation. His sturdy unromanticism stood him in good stead here, and it was because of such men of strong purpose that the Council was able to triumph over the ceaseless political intrigue which made it in some ways more like an arena than a council chamber.

The present massive biography has all the requirements of a work of scholarship. It covers seven hundred large pages and is well documented throughout. If there is not much advance in any detailed knowledge of the inner workings of the Council itself it is at least partly on account of the extraordinary paucity of material for the later history of Trent. Trent needs to be studied in greater detail in these days in order to discover the theological implications of its decrees, some of which are only now beginning to become vital in the Church. This biography will be of great value to all students of the Reformation period and in particular of Trent; and it will be of interest too to the general reader. The production of the book is most pleasing and refreshing in these days of parsimony of paper and press.

JOHN HUNSTER.

A TORCHBEARER. *Memoirs of Emily C. Fortey.* Edited by F. P. Armistage. (Blackfriars; 2s.)

On the cover of this small collection of memoirs, Emily Fortey is described as a torchbearer, but it must not be inferred from this title that she was a firebrand. It is true that her active participation in social services, rescue work, and in the Leicester City Council and on the Education Committee, brought her into prominence, but her exertions were prompted by tremendous enthusiasm for the cause of justice and truth and never by a desire to shine in the public eye. She had many qualities which endeared her to those who came in contact with her, but above all, it was her love for all sorts of people, and her downright frankness about them, coupled with the trust she placed in them which compelled the admiration of many who differed from her in matters of religion and politics. Diversified though the contributors to these memoirs are, there is a wonderful unanimity among them when speaking of Emily Fortey's conspicuous virtues and characteristics. Unconsciously and without effort she impressed them by her vigorous tenacity of purpose and unbounded charity, though possibly only a small minority realised that her enthusiasm and her vivacious way of setting about things were rooted in her devotion to the Catholic Church and her loyal obedience to its precepts. Intimate friends and chance acquaintances will read with pleasure the memoirs of one who gave freely of her best and asked for no reward in return.

FABIAN DIX, O.P.

EXTRACTS

LA MAISON-DIEU (No. 13, Blackfriars Publications, 4s. 6d.) has by this established itself as the organ *par excellence* of a liturgical revival that is grounded in what is essential and most in conformity with the mind of the Church. Dom Beauduin's authoritative commentary on the encyclical, *Mediator Dei*, is especially notable:

The encyclical marks a decisive date in the liturgical renaissance. . . . For, if it be true that the liturgy is the authentic exercise of the priesthood of Christ here below, a liturgical revival will determine a more interior and a more universal realisation of the priesthood of Christ, will cast a stronger light on mankind, drawing as it does its strength from that source of light and of life. It will be, in the interior and hidden domain of the Church's life, what the Encyclicals of Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei* and *Rerum Novarum*, were in the christian restoration of society. No doubt *Mediator Dei* will not have this majestic significance for everyone. . . . But one day, when the Church of Christ will have gathered together all the faithful in her christian assemblies, pulsating with faith and love; when the liturgy, lived and loved, will have become the prayer of all her children; then will be understood the full force and the true significance of what the Holy Father has accomplished.

The remainder of this number of *La Maison-Dieu* is for the most part taken up with accounts of recent Congresses in France, and in particular the Lyons Congress of the *Centre de Pastorale Liturgique* held last September.

* * * *

A NEW MUSICAL SETTING of the Mass, *Missa 'Ave Maria,'* by Michael Bowles, has recently been published by Cary and Co. (2s. 0d.). Arranged for tenor, bass and baritone, this mass has an austere economy of melody and development that is at first forbidding, but which, with better acquaintance, reveals it as in the authentic polyphonic tradition. Mr Bowles has done a great deal in recent years for the musical life of Dublin, and one may hope that his influence may now extend to the choirs of Dublin's churches. From the same publishers *A Handbook for Catholic Choirmasters* (2s. 6d.) should be useful.

* * * *

CATHOLIC VISITORS TO PARIS will find the Nefs et Clochers series of illustrated guides to churches invaluable. Fifteen handbooks dealing with churches on the south bank of the Seine are now available in a convenient container, which includes a map and a delightful introduction by Etienne Gilson, in which he deplores the vandalism (on

the part of well-intentioned Catholics too often) which has ruined so many Paris churches. But much that is lovely remains, and *Les Eglises de Paris: Rive Gauche* is a worthy monument. It costs 15s. 0d. and is obtainable from Blackfriars Publications.

* * * *

THE MASS IN MY LIFE is the title of a new Y.C.W. pamphlet (1s. from 106 Clapham Road, S.W.9) clearly set out for enquiries at weekly meetings over a period of six months. There are twenty-four enquiries for the campaign dealing with the general aspects of the Mass in daily life but it also takes the enquirers step by step through the individual parts of the Holy Sacrifice. 'Above all, our apostolate and our Mass must be our whole life offered with that of Christ'—that is the tone, characteristic and effective; and it may be linked up with the Grail's campaign for the Rosary which can be made into a vehicle for continuing the Sacrifice into the day. The Grail has begun a series, 'What's in your Pocket?' to deal with the 15 mysteries between May 1st and August 15th, one decade per week. 'If you follow this Action carefully it is almost certain that by the end of the three months you will have found in yourself a real love for the rosary'. It is certainly worth trying.

* * * *

'IS IT TRUE that nothing can be done for the dying man because he is not a Catholic and does not wish to become one?' There is an 'Apostolate to Assist Dying Non-Catholics' with headquarters at Cincinnati, Ohio (Rt Rev. Markham, Compton Road, Cincinnati 15). It provides a variety of prayer cards which can be bought to distribute in hospitals, etc., to encourage the non-Catholic to pray. Archbishop McNicholas of that city has sponsored it very willingly and in a letter to his diocesans wrote: 'I beg of every priest of the Archdiocese to enter enthusiastically into this Apostolate to Aid the Dying. Thousands of non-Catholics, through our effort, may acknowledge the supreme domination of God and the Divinity of Christ, beg pardon for their sins and implore divine mercy'.

* * * *

OLD AGE is an increasing problem in these days when the whole nation is growing older at the same time as the younger generation tends to refuse responsibility for its progenitors. The pamphlet on 'The Happiness of Growing Old', by an octogenarian, will therefore be welcomed by many (price 1s. 6d. from Ducketts or from the authoress at St Raphael's, Brownhill, Glos.)

As we lose our friends out of sight, how grows in Paradise our store! Some feel lonely, or in the way or not wanted; but we can

always at any time, night or day, have the very best of all good company.

'Only the Trinity can fill

The vast three-cornered heart of man'.

But they will come and . . . make their abode with us. . . .

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor, LIFE OF THE SPIRIT.

Sir,—In your April issue, which by the way I have enjoyed very much, there is an article to a part of which I would like to take exception. In the conclusion of 'The Divine Office for the Laity', by an Augustinian Tertiary, he comments on the language difficulty. There are many of us who have not the time or the ability to get sufficient knowledge of Latin; surely such as we should not be debarred from active participation in the Divine Office.

When we consider that clerics and religious are deputed by the Church to recite the Office in the name of the Church *and in Latin*, if we laity recite it in English do we not associate ourselves with them in reciting the official prayer of the Church as members of the Mystical Body? I agree that the association would be more complete if we recited it in Latin, but it is no wise affected by saying it in the vernacular.

Is there not an obvious parallel? If the Breviary in English is in any way futile for the laity, so is the Missal in the same language. Of course one can visualise the day when the laity co-operate more fully with those whose duty it is to use Latin and use all Latin Missals and Bréviaries.

Yours faithfully,

CHARLES O'LEARY.

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